

stand up for fiscal sanity and actually stop the practice of earmarking like we are doing.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in opposition to this amendment. As Mr. HASTINGS said earlier, there is in current law the Office of Economic Development, which has the responsibility of working with public and private sectors, as well as not-for-profit organizations, to provide financial and technical assistance to local communities to develop and implement their own economic development in their community. That's current law.

If we want to change that, I agree with much of what the gentleman has to say, I just think this is not the right time and place to be covering it in this manner. But it gives me a little bit of a chance to talk about my district, and all 435 of us, I think, love to have the opportunity to talk about our districts.

I have a map here which shows my district. It is the second largest district in California, a little over 21,000 square miles. I live down here. This is Nevada. This is central to northern California. It is about 450 miles this way, a couple hundred miles this way. A little perspective: eight States would fit within this county, one of the largest counties.

In this county, the town of Bishop, some of the community people have every year for the last 40 years celebrated what they call Mule Days, and about 50,000 people come to this community of 3,500 people. In this whole county that I said eight States would fit in, about 17,000 people live, and about 3,500 people live in the town of Bishop. They are great people.

Here are the eastern Sierras, Death Valley. We have the lowest spot in the 48 States and the highest spot. Death Valley is 280 feet below sea level, and we have Mount Whitney that is about 15,000 feet above sea level. It is a great district, just as each of your districts are.

Several years ago, and actually they have been working on this for a few years, Bob Tanner and some of the people in Bishop thought that they should have a museum to celebrate the mules. Ninety-five percent of this county is owned by Federal and local governments. They don't have any room. There are only a few acres in this town that could even be developed. They don't have the land to develop for economic development. They rely totally on tourism, restaurants, motels, packers that take people up into the mountains. Mules have been an important part of this, and they want to establish a museum. They are asking for \$50,000. L.A. City is going to donate \$2 million worth of land, 8 acres. The county and

the city are putting up a little over a million and a half dollars, and the people that live there are going to raise another hundred, \$250,000.

One thing that I think we forget is that the people in Bishop pay taxes. They pay Federal taxes, and I guarantee you that during the time that Jerry represented them and the time I have had the opportunity to represent them, they have gotten very little back from the Federal Government for the taxes that they have sent here to Washington.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. McKEON. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. LEWIS of California. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Indeed, this territory was a part of my district for some time, and the people are incredibly wonderful people. They reflect the best of the American West. And there is no doubt that they are the best and they are there in the West in no small part because of the mule.

I must say that the gentleman is making a very, very important point. It is a long, long ways away from somebody else's district to become an expert in terms of a subject like this. It causes me just to smile, and so I intend to help the gentleman if I possibly can by voting "no" on this amendment.

Mr. McKEON. I thank the gentleman.

Let me tell you a little bit about mules because this is one of the things that they are going to honor in this museum. George Washington introduced mules into our country. He received a jack donkey in 1786 from the King of Spain, and he started breeding and using mules. Within a few years, he had 58 mules working on his plantation a few miles south in Mount Vernon.

Since then, mules have been used to develop the West. All across the Nation, they helped the pioneers move. They could go 30 miles a day where wagon trains could only go about 5. They were an integral part of the development of this country. Even today, we have 600 mules on special assignment serving in Afghanistan helping the Army do the things that they helped the Army do 100 years ago.

I think \$50,000, you know, is a good contribution to give to these people, the money that they have sent back here.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to thank the gentleman from Arizona for the opportunity to come to the floor to discuss the American Mule and Packer Museum and the economic development impact it will have on my district.

Let me first start by saying that this \$50,000 is not included in this bill to laud the humble and noble mule. These funds will be used to boost tourism dollars in the small city of Bishop, CA by helping to build a local heritage museum.

The city of Bishop is located in Inyo County—which is geographically one of the largest counties in the country and is 95 percent owned by the federal government. Bishop is a classic western frontier city and has been

squeezed out of all other industries by the encroachment of federal land, which literally surrounds it and limits the community to survival on tourism dollars. Those vitally important dollars come from visitors eager to see the great Wild West, ride out like our forefathers into the Eastern Sierra, enjoy the natural beauty on a hike, or hire a mule packer to explore the federal forests in the area.

The \$50,000 dollar grant contained in this bill for the American Mule Museum is a modest federal investment in a worthy economic development project and a good example of how federal seed money is leveraged to develop local projects.

Every year, at the fairgrounds on Main Street, the small city of Bishop hosts a famous and popular heritage festival known as "Mule Days." Some communities have an Apple Harvest festival, some have Frontier Days. In Bishop, we celebrate "Mule Days." My friend from Arizona may not be familiar with the essential role Packers and their trusted mules had to the settlement of the west, but California's home state President did. Next to me is a picture of then-Governor Ronald Reagan acting as the Grand Marshall to the Bishop Mule Days parade in 1974.

Mule Days is the single largest draw to that community, bringing fifty thousand Californians and tourists interested in frontier life into downtown Bishop, where they shop, dine and stay during the festival. In addition to honoring their history, this museum would help expand that tourism by drawing folks in year-round, rather than just during the long Memorial Day weekend Mule Days celebration. The City of Los Angeles, a longtime landholder in our northern county, is going to donate an estimated 8 acres, valued at \$2,000,000 for the project. Inyo County will spend an additional \$1.5 million with the hook-ups, parking lots and access roads. Finally, this federal grant, directed to National Forest and Recreation Association, in Woodlake, CA (the non-profit overseeing the project) and private fundraising will be used towards the excavation and reconstruction of the famed Livermore Packing Station, and the surrounding corrals in Bishop.

There is a federal interest in preserving the history of how the West was settled. There are many residents in the city and surrounding areas who are direct descendants of those pioneers who headed west. A museum dedicated to local heritage and mule packers that were so important to the founding of the area will be a proper place to preserve their artifacts and documents into the future.

The residents of the City of Bishop, my constituents and federal tax payers are dependent on tourism dollars for their city funds. There are 480 separate EDI projects listed in the THUD bill ranging from \$50,000 up to \$500,000 with the majority of projects falling in the \$100 K to \$200 K range. The projects, with a few exceptions, are for the planning, land purchase, construction or renovation of facilities deemed to be important to economic development in both rural and urban areas. The construction of a museum celebrating local history is a common theme throughout many of the projects. I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment and help preserve a piece of American history in a place that is deserving of federal assistance.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.